

This is an official

CDC Health Advisory

Distributed via Health Alert Network

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Hepatitis A infections Linked to Children Adopted from Ethiopia and their Family Contacts

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently received reports of hepatitis A in children and adults linked to adoptees from Ethiopia. Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Symptoms usually occur abruptly and include fatigue, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes), and diarrhea. Jaundice is common in adults but rare in children. Most children under the age of 6 years do not get sick from the infection, but can spread it to older children and adults, who often become ill. Older persons and persons with chronic liver disease can have more serious illness. The overall mortality rate from hepatitis A is 0.3%, but it is 1.8% among persons aged ≥ 50 years. Symptoms generally last up to 2 months; there is no chronic (long-term) form of the disease.

The virus is found in the stool (feces) of persons with hepatitis A. It is usually spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth that has been contaminated with stool. Frequent hand washing with soap and water, particularly after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and before preparing or eating food, is very important in preventing the spread of hepatitis A.

To prevent hepatitis A virus infections, CDC recommends that travelers to areas with high rates of hepatitis A, including Ethiopia, receive hepatitis A vaccine as soon as travel is considered. CDC also recommends that all children ≥ 1 year of age receive the hepatitis A vaccine. Other household members and caregivers of children adopted from Ethiopia should consider being vaccinated before adopted children are brought to the United States.

Adopted children, household members or other persons experiencing symptoms of hepatitis A should contact a health-care provider for an evaluation. Persons exposed to hepatitis A who have not been previously immunized should contact their health-care provider or local health department to determine if they should receive an immunization or immunoglobulin that might prevent the illness. More information about hepatitis A is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/>.

CDC recommends that all international travelers consult a travel health-care provider 4-6 weeks prior to travel to determine if any other measures, such as immunizations or medications, are indicated for the planned itinerary. Vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles and mumps, are still common in many parts of the world, including developed countries. The CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>) has a specific section for Traveling with Children, which includes general health advice for international adoptees and their adoptive parents, and Travel Notices, which describe current disease information of interest to travelers.

DHEC Contact Information for Reportable Diseases and Reporting Requirements

Reporting of Hepatitis A cases to SCDHEC is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and

Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2004 List of Reportable Conditions available at:
http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/docs/reportable_conditions.pdf

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2006-2007

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

Region 1

Anderson, Oconee

220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 260-4358
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-298-4442

Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Saluda

1736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: 1-888-218-5475
Fax: (864) 942-3690
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915

Region 2

Greenville, Pickens

PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 282-4139
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-993-1186

Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union

PO Box 4217
151 E. Wood Street
Spartanburg, SC 29305-4217
Phone: (864) 596-2227, x- 210
Fax: (864) 596-3443
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-993-1186

Region 3

Chester, Lancaster, York

PO Box 817
1833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29721
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-867-3886

Region 3 (continued)

Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland

2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-554-9915

Region 4

Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter

PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 775-9941
Nights/Weekends: 1-877-831-4647

Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion

145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 660-8145

Region 5

Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg

PO Box 1126
1550 Carolina Avenue
Orangeburg, SC 29116
Phone: (803) 533-7199
Fax: (803) 533-7134
Nights / Weekends: (803) 954-8513

Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell

1680 Richland Avenue, W. Suite 40
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (803) 827-8668 or
1-800-614-1519

Region 6

Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg

2830 Oak Street
Conway, SC 29526-4560
Phone: (843) 365-3126, x-138 or x-174
Fax: (843) 365-3153
Nights / Weekends: (843) 381-6710

Region 7

Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester

4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 746-3806
Fax: (843) 746-3851
Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470

Region 8

Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper

219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 549-1516, x-214
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-614-4698

DHEC Bureau of Disease Control Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology

1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC 29211
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902



www.scdhec.gov

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.